

WICHE



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

WICHE Mental Health Program Veteran Suicide Prevention Efforts

The background of the slide is a photograph showing the silhouettes of several soldiers in full combat gear, including helmets and rifles. They are standing in a field, looking towards a bright sun that is low on the horizon, creating a strong backlighting effect. The sky is a warm, golden-orange color. In the distance, some power lines are visible.

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Vice President for Behavioral Health

Presentation to Utah Veterans and Military Affairs Commission

August 7, 2018

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

What is WICHE?

- Created by Western Regional Education Compact in 1950 for resource sharing among higher education systems
- Includes 15 Western states, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
- Governed by 3 gubernatorially appointed commissioners from each member state
- Mental health program “dedicated to improving behavioral health systems of care in the West and beyond”
 - Offers technical assistance, education, and consulting
 - Prepares qualified behavioral health workforce

Veterans and Suicide

- Risk of suicide for Veterans is **22% higher** than civilians
- An average of **20 Veterans** die from suicide each day
 - Only 6 of 20 (30%) used VA services
- Suicide rate in Utah is **fifth highest** in the nation
- Utah Veteran suicide rate is **nearly double** national rate
 - 62.4 per 100,000 versus national rate of 38.4 (2014)

Together With Veterans Rural Suicide Prevention Program (TWV)

A Public Private Partnership funded by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and implemented by

- VA Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center for Suicide Prevention (MIRECC)
- WICHE
- Rural community-based, Veteran-run organizations

TWV: A Public Private Partnership

Rocky Mountain MIRECC provides

- Project oversight
- Program evaluation
- Research and technical support

WICHE Provides

- Community-Based Program Development
- Leadership and support to local Veteran run organizations for program coordination
- Adapt Primary Care Suicide Prevention Toolkit to Include Veteran/Military Culture
- Develop Web-based and Digital Tools

Veteran-run Organizations Provide

- Expertise in specific needs and resources for Veterans in their community
- Local coordination of assessment, planning and implementation activities
- Advocacy and promotion of Veteran suicide prevention efforts

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Components of TWV Community-Based Program Development

Community Identification & Engagement

Assessment and Education

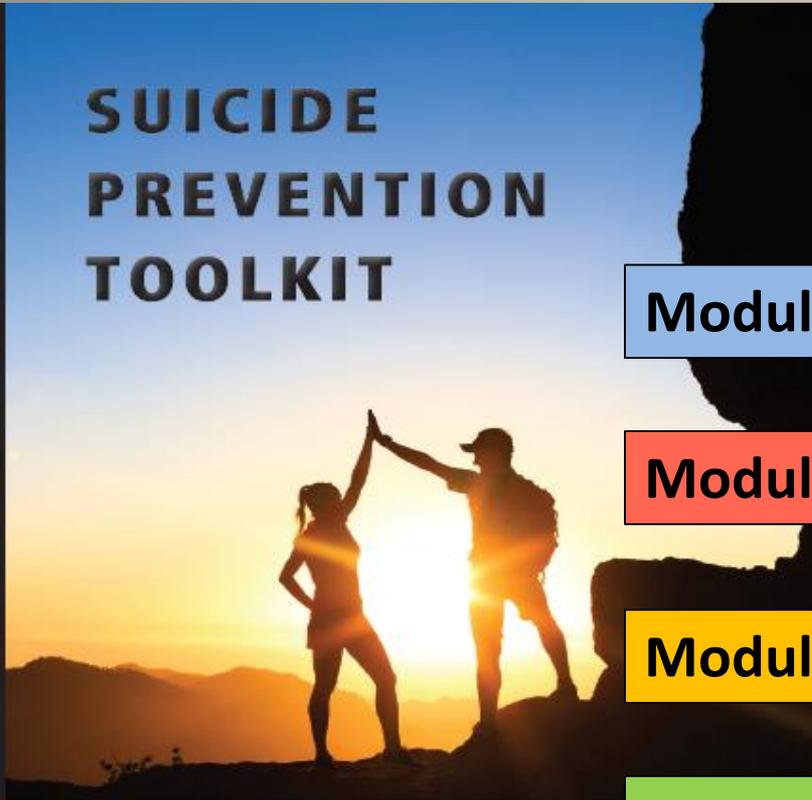
Planning and Implementation

Progress of TWV Community-Based Program Development

Three Active Sites

- San Luis Valley, Colorado
 - Since 2016
 - Implementing action plan
- Northwest Montana
 - Since March 2018
 - Assessment and planning
- Carteret County, North Carolina
 - Since May 2018
 - Engaging Veteran organizations and community partners

SUICIDE PREVENTION TOOLKIT



for
PRIMARY CARE
PRACTICES



Module 1: Prevalence and Comorbidity

Module 2: Epidemiology

Module 3: Effective Prevention Strategies

Module 4: Suicide Risk Assessment

Module 5: Intervention

Primary Care Suicide Prevention Toolkit

- Partnership with Suicide Prevention Resource Center
- Original target audience was rural communities
- Updated in 2017 for primary care across all communities



Primary Care Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Veteran and military culture component

- Explains relevance of military history
- Defines branches of service and deployment eras
- Describes increased risk regarding Veteran suicide rate and use of lethal means



Primary Care Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Toolkit dissemination to primary care providers

- Toolkit training offered to providers in TWV sites
- Montana suicide prevention coordinator uses toolkit to provide trainings to primary care providers throughout the state
- Currently developing webinars



Web-Based and Digital Suicide Prevention Tools

- Web-based toolkit to support community-based Veteran suicide prevention program development
- Digital application for Veterans to self screen needs and link to appropriate resources



For More Information

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